

## Message Text

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ORIGIN HA-05

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SHUM, GV

SUBJECT: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL RELEASE ON GUINEA

TRANSMITTED BELOW IS THE TEXT OF AN AI NEWS RELEASE OF  
JUNE 21, 1978. DEPARTMENT HAS POUCHED THE 11 PAGE  
BROCHURE, "BRIEFING ON GUINEA", TO THE EMBASSY ON JUNE 22  
AND WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSY'S COMMENTS, PARTICULARLY WITH  
REGARD TO ACCURACY OF ALLEGATIONS OF CONTINUED USE OF  
TORTURE AND BEST ESTIMATE OF NUMBER OF POLITICAL DETAINEES.  
QUOTE -- AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL TODAY EXPRESSED CONCERN AT  
THE WIDESPREAD USE OF DETENTION WITHOUT TRIAL IN GUINEA AND  
URGED PRESIDENT AHMED SEKOU TOURE TO TAKE IMMEDIATE AND  
EFFECTIVE ACTION TO IMPROVE THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION.  
THIS CALL WAS MADE AS AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL RELEASED AN  
11-PAGE BRIEFING ON GUINEA WHICH DESCRIBES IN DETAIL THE  
LONGSTANDING PATTERN OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN THE  
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COUNTRY. QUOTE - IN THE BRIEFING PAPER PUBLISHED TODAY,  
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL ESTIMATES THAT THERE ARE BETWEEN  
2,000-4,000 POLITICAL PRISONERS IN GUINEA, A COUNTRY WHOSE  
POPULATION IS ONLY SOME FIVE MILLION. MOST OF THE  
PRISONERS ARE HELD AT TWO MAIN PRISON CAMPS, CAMP BOIRO IN  
THE CAPITAL, CONAKRY, AND THE KEME BOUREIMA CAMP AT  
KINDIA. CONDITIONS OF IMPRISONMENT ARE PARTICULARLY HARSH.

POLITICAL PRISONERS ARE COMPLETELY ISOLATED FROM THE

OUTSIDE WORLD AND ARE NOT ALLOWED TO RECEIVE VISITS OR EVEN LETTERS FROM THEIR FAMILIES. MANY PRISONERS HAVE BEEN DETAINED WITHOUT TRIAL FOR SEVEN YEARS; OTHERS WERE SENTENCED TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT AFTER ARBITRARY LEGAL PROCEEDINGS AT WHICH THEY WERE NOT ALLOWED TO BE PRESENT. QUOTE -- AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL ALSO CLAIMS THAT THE DEATH RATE AMONG POLITICAL PRISONERS IS PARTICULARLY HIGH AND REPORTS THAT MORE THAN 250 DEATHS OCCURRED IN ONE PARTICULAR SECTION OF CAMP BOIRO ALONE BETWEEN MARCH AND SEPTEMBER 1974. MANY PRISONERS ARE SAID TO HAVE BEEN STARVED TO DEATH. IN SOME CASES IT IS NOT KNOWN WHETHER INDIVIDUAL PRISONERS ARE NOW ALIVE OR DEAD. QUOTE -- THE BRIEFING PAPER SAYS THAT TORTURE HAS BECOME AN "ESSENTIAL PART OF THE MACHINERY OF REPRESSION" SINCE GUINEA'S INDEPENDENCE IN 1958. IT IS USED BOTH AS A MEANS OF GENERAL INTIMIDATION AND IN ORDER TO EXTRACT "CONFESSIONS" FROM REAL OR SUSPECTED OPPONENTS OF THE GOVERNMENT AND THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN MADE "SCAPEGOATS" FOR THE COUNTRY'S POLITICAL ISOLATION AND ECONOMIC FAILURES. METHODS OF TORTURE INCLUDE THE USE OF ELECTRIC SHOCKS, SEVERE BEATINGS, BURNING WITH CIGARETTES AND PARTIAL SUFFOCATION. QUOTE -- AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL SAID THAT ITS BRIEFING WAS BEING PUBLISHED AT A TIME WHEN THERE WAS SOME HUMAN RIGHTS IMPROVEMENT IN GUINEA. RECENT REPORTS SUGGESTED THAT A LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NUMBER OF LONG-TERM POLITICAL PRISONERS, INCLUDING ROMAN CATHOLIC ARCHBISHOP RAYMOND-MARIE TCHIDIMBO, WERE BEING RELEASED AT A TIME WHEN GUINEA IS INCREASINGLY SENSITIVE ABOUT INTERNATIONAL CRITICISM ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES. HOWEVER, IT WAS CLEAR THAT MOST OF GUINEA POLITICAL PRISONERS HAD NOT BEEN RELEASED, AND THERE WERE FEW SIGNS THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS YET READY TO UNDERTAKE THE SORT OF FUNDAMENTAL REFORMS NECESSARY TO PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS. -- END QUOTE. VANCE

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## Message Attributes

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